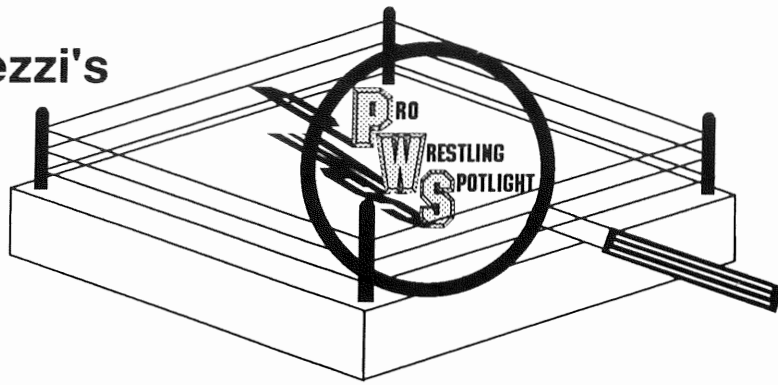


John Arezzi's



Newsletter

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BILL WATTS HIRED BY WCW!!

by John Arezzi

In a stunning move which caught most by surprise, Bill Watts has been named the new Vice President of Wrestling Operations of the Ted Turner owned World Championship Wrestling. The announcement was made at 11am on Tuesday May 13th at the company's corporate headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. Kip Frey, was for all intents and purposes "demoted" to the position of Vice President of Business Operations for WCW. Frey will now oversee the financial end, as well as the merchandising end of the company. He has been taken completely out of the creative end of the business. Dusty Rhodes, the current booker of WCW, still remains in place, although insiders feel with Watts there, Dusty's role will be if not terminated, under heavy scrutiny. Dusty has a contract with WCW until December of this year.

The dramatic move was made by Bill Shaw, who was appointed President of WCW about a month ago, taking over for Jack Petrick. Bob Dew, who was appointed as VP of WCW at the same time as Shaw, was also instrumental in making the move. Ted Turner gave his approval and blessing of the Watts hiring. According to insiders, Frey fell into disfavor with Shaw and Dew over his decision to allow Dusty Rhodes the power to do virtually everything he wanted to creatively. The move was being contemplated as long as a month ago, and some say came to a head when a crowd of just over 1,000 (not all of them paid) showed up at Atlanta's Omni last Sunday (May 10th), surely an embarrassment to the top brass of WCW. In fairness to Kip Frey, he was only at the helm a short time, and it was too early to tell if he could have turned the company around. However, those running WCW felt it was time to make the move, and Watts has long been considered a "savior" by many in and out of the promotion.

For hard-core wrestling fans, the appointment of Bill Watts is a dream come true. He has long been held in high regard by the fans due to the success he had running the original Universal Wrestling Federation (UWF). The UWF was very close to becoming the nations third major wrestling promotion in the mid '80s, at one time appearing in over 100 television markets. Watts, facing a cash crunch in 1987, sold the company to Jim Crockett, a move which Watts reportedly now regrets.

The Watts run UWF has been often called the most solid run pro wrestling programming of the past ten years. The UWF created many stars, including current WCW Champion Sting, Rick Steiner, Dr. Death Steve Williams, Eddie Gilbert, and other favorites of today's fans. He was also instrumental in introducing the masses to Jim Ross, considered to be the top play-by-play man in the business today.

Watts was in the WCW offices as of 5/13, at the time of the announcement, and almost immediately the word spread throughout the grapevine. I spoke to an unnamed WCW star who was excited about the appointment of Watts. He said the wrestlers who go the word were all positive about the move.

One thing is for certain, Cowboy Bill has his work cut out for him. Dwindling attendance, mediocre TV ratings, and a sense of lack of direction in WCW all point to a rough job ahead. Here at PWS we wish him the best of luck.



What Can We Expect From Watts?

The appointment of Cowboy Bill Watts as Executive Vice President of WCW will begin a new era in WCW, and perhaps, all of Pro Wrestling. Of course, it's too early to predict a long or short term effect from his efforts. From speaking to many insiders over the past 24 hours, I got some interesting feed back from everyone I've talked to.

Below is some initial speculation of what Watts might do with some of the individuals and situations he has inherited, based on talks I've had with insiders.

STING: With Watts in, look for Sting's role to be made stronger. What we might see is a tougher, no nonsense champion. Watts is reportedly a big Sting fan, and his hiring might just be the change Sting needs to finally become a true champion. The types of opponents he faces and the way he is portrayed will be revamped.

EDDIE GILBERT: Almost everyone feels that Eddie will be brought into assist Watts. If that happens, Gilbert and Jim Ross will have to put their personal problems they have with each other aside and I believe they can. Eddie is an intense person and his desire to rebuild WCW is real.

DUSTY RHODES: Probably won't last with the company past the Great American Bash.

NIKITA KOLOFF: Won't be a baby face too much longer.

GUARANTEED CONTRACTS: Watts believes wrestlers perform better when they have an incentive to. He believes pay should be based on performance. With the house show business dead it will be interesting to see if he begins to curtail guaranteed contracts, and begins paying those whose contracts run out and new employees based on the live gate. The business has changed dramatically in the past five years (since Watts left it) and we'll find out soon if his visions of pay for the wrestlers has changed too.

BLOOD: This could be a first. Watts is a believer on a more violent, believable style of wrestling, which includes blood. TBS currently restricts hard-core violence and blood. Can there be a compromise? We'll find out soon.

RELATIONSHIP WITH "INSIDE" WRESTLING REPORTERS: Probably won't be as easy to get to as Kip Frey. Watts is from the old school, and even though he speaks highly of the newsletter industry, I have the feeling he won't be as accessible as Frey was with the media.

THE WATTS TAPES

by Wade Keller

Editors Note: *Pro Wrestling Torch* Editor, Wade Keller, interviewed Bill Watts on July 24th and July 26th of last year. Wade has graciously consented to allow PWS to reprint part of that interview, which has even more impact today. A lengthy interview with Watts was included in the 1991 *Pro Wrestling Torch* Annual, and is still available by Wade for \$12.00. I highly recommend it. Send your orders to: Wade Keller c/o *Pro Wrestling Torch*, P.O. Box 201844, Minneapolis, MN 55420

Keller: Speaking of Dusty, what do you think of him today?

Watts: I think Dusty has no personal discipline. Dusty is a genius. Dusty has to have somebody who has an iron hand above him who knows wrestling. Then Dusty can be success-

ful. If Dusty has somebody sitting above him that Dusty can buffalo or Dusty can fool, like Jimmy Crockett - the problem with Jimmy Crockett was he couldn't book. So he couldn't say "Dusty, fuck you. If you do this you're out and I'll run it." Well, see every time I've had Dusty working with me, believe you me, I knew Dusty was a genius, but I could do it too, so he couldn't bullshit me and I wasn't afraid of firing him. And see, that's the difference. That's the problem with Turner Broadcasting. You've got a corporate structure, Turner Broadcasting has turned into a bunch of feudal systems where every head of his division wants to cover his own ass, and here's Jack Petrick, who doesn't know shit about wrestling and he's hired a guy who's a complete idiot. Herd is a kind of guy who is a complete back door artist. He is a corporate animal. He knows very well how to sit there and butter his own bread with his corporate buddy. But let me tell you, it's like I told Jack Petrick, the buck stops at the top. If you're in charge of the division, how can you sit there taking credit for it when it's the shits. Of course, you see, with Turner Broadcasting, they need their original programming so that's all wrestling has become to them. Their problem is they're losing their ass on the road. And that's a shame. And so what you have is wrestlers with no pride, Vince McMahon must die laughing every day because he rarely went the wrong direction and they've become a cheap imitation of McMahon where they should have had their own identity. At least Crockett and Dusty started off different originally and were doing pretty well. And then they got caught up in the same syndrome.

You're not going to out-copy McMahon, you're gonna look like a copy. He's got his own original style and stamp and he's very successful with it because he does his promotion right. He's got Hulk Hogan who's a fabulous guy. And for whatever Vince is promoting, he catches the public's attention. The only way to go is the opposite way he goes. The only problem is, under Ted Turner they've become a cheap imitation copy which has finished them off. You go to their gates and there's no house, the athletes all sit in the dressing room and have no pride anymore. They're just collecting their checks.

Keller: What do you think about all of the guaranteed contracts WCW has signed?

Watts: Well, let me tell you, if you create a situation where guys can collect their checks when the house is the shits, you have taken the desire and the incentive out of them. In the old days, if the house was down, you busted your ass to get it up and you knew that the gate depended on your pay. Yet, today you've got guys who make a fortune whether it draws five cents. It's like the Ric Flair situation, they could have Hulk Hogan and wouldn't know what to do with him. The wrestlers are just tools to use and if the promotion doesn't know how to use the tool, the tool is no good. Hell, you could have a diamond drill there with Turner Broadcasting and they'd treat it like a pick. They don't understand. And unfortunately because Ted Turner doesn't pay any attention anymore - Jack Petrick told me himself, he said, "Turner doesn't mind losing money to get a division started." I said, "Yes, Jack, but there is no sense to losing this kind of money in wrestling, it's a cash flow business. It's not like putting an equity into buying something to get it started. This is a business that should be making money already. And let me tell you, there is no reason this division should not be making money on all fronts. And it's not that hard. It really isn't. It's just the way they're managing it, the people they keep going back to. The one thing about me, they really don't appreciate somebody who's honest. When you tell people the truth that are in the corporate world, it scares them.

And you've got to realize that everybody that was there when I went over for the interview, they were already doing the job on me because anybody that knows they weren't doing their job know they wouldn't be there long because I don't tolerate dead weight. I mean, if you're working for me, you better be pulling your own weight or you're gone. All these guys that knew they were on a gravy train, they're going crazy because they were afraid I was going to get the job. Everybody was calling me going, "You going to keep me?" I said, "Hey, I don't even have the job." And I said, "Let me tell you, everybody starts with me even. There are some people that would go the day I get there because they are just not worth having around. But you start even because you know what I expect and I don't have to like you to work with you. All I expect is performance. So I said, "If you perform, you keep your job, and if you don't you're history. It's simple."

They have probably one of the greatest commentators in the business, another kid that I trained, Jim Ross. And he's a hell of a guy. Of course, he's got to watch his step because he's a Bill Watts fan. But Jim is overloaded. I mean, he's trying to do too much. He can only do so much.

Keller: A lot of people are talking now that WCW may get so bad that Ted may drop it...

Watts: Well, I'm surprised he hasn't dropped it yet. You've got to realize he needs fresh programming on that Superstation. He's got to have something because of those rules. He still gets fairly decent ratings, although nothing like he should.

Keller: What if it got so bad that people were really surprised he was not dropping it and he really should drop it, but he did not want to drop it. Then would you be an option?

Watts: I don't think they'd even consider me. I don't know if I want to anymore. Hmm. Well, yeah, I would do it for one reason. I'll tell ya the biggest reason. You've got to figure what your biggest motive is to do something. Money has never been my overriding concern. People think it has, but it hasn't. I've always done what I've liked to do and done it as well as I can do it and the money takes care of itself. Now, I would demand money because that's what they should have to do for me doing it. But I wouldn't do it just for the money. I would return to wrestling to show everybody I could do it, and do it successfully. I'd do it to show Ted Turner that, "Ted, I told you I could be a key part of your operation." It would be for the pride of doing it just to show him. Then I think he might let me do other things that I might have ideas in. And that would be exciting because he is at the center of a lot of things happening. I think that would be a fun thing to be a part of. It's not a mystery to me. I don't even watch it anymore. I can tune in and see it hasn't changed that much. It's management and it's understanding the tools that your working with and the vocabulary and the things that create it. And it's understanding the fans. All the fans want to get what they paid to see. My motto was always, "Give the fans more than they paid to go see." I always believed, if you look at my old wrestling shows, they gave the fans more than they anticipated. That's why they liked 'em.

I liked when these first insider newsletters like the *Torch* came out. I used to get a kick out of when people thought they new my direction when they didn't. But that's why they loved my show. But when they could predict things, well... And let me tell you, I don't read the newsletters much anymore. I pick up yours every once in a while and read it just to see what is going on. I haven't read an *Observer* in a long time. But they used to pick trends out in my own business. And I would tell the promoters, you ought to read these kids. They're your fuckin'

mirror. And they wouldn't do it. They'd say, "Fuck those kids, what do they know?" I said, "I'll tell ya, those kids are like that small crowd that's left when the weather is bad. They're the people that love this sport no matter how we've bastardized and raped it. And if they're pointing out something that's so fuckin' apparent it's stupid, don't you think that everybody else sees it too?" I'd read all your newsletters and I would love it when you all knew my direction, but you didn't. I also loved it - not loved it, it would offend me when you would point out how stupid I was doing something. But I would have to look at it then. I would have to look at it and evaluate it. I wouldn't quickly say, "they're right." But if I saw something when they were right I would admit that I did that wrong. Because you see, you can also go through trends in your own mind when you get intoxicated with yourself. And you can lose and forget what you've got there. But the thing that built wrestling was that it was something that was brought to the fans in each town that they could participate in. And when you lose that and you start insulting them, some of them will go anyway because they love the sport, but then they start going for a different reason, they're going because it's so bad and they get their kicks out of how bad the promotion can fuck it up. Again, to put back the range in it. We're one of the first promotions to study our market and build around different demographics. Then you couldn't have everyone be steroid freaks. You've got to have a complete range. Hell, that's all the fans want.

Keller: Okay, let's say it's around January and Herd and Dusty are fired and Jack Petrick resigns and another corporate guy hires you. You have your entire hand to do what you want. What are you going to do?

Watts: Unless I met with Ted Turner and Ted gave me his blessing and I believed him, I wouldn't fuckin' touch it. Otherwise I wouldn't touch it. It would just be another corporate animal. That's what they breed over there.

Keller: Let's say Ted gives you his blessing...

Watts: If Ted sat down with me and we had a fabulous repoire... Ted and I had a fabulous repoire one time. Let me tell ya, I think the guy was a genius. And he says, "I want you to do this," so I knew exactly what he wanted. Ya' see, I couldn't fulfill my goal if I didn't know what his goal was. I sure couldn't fulfill his goal if I didn't know what it was. What they're really doing now is crossing purposes. They cannot be successful in the way they are going without some major changes in it. And I don't want to get into it now because every time I've tried to give them the answer, they've tried to copy it. Fortunately they've just been copies and they haven't been successful at it, because none of them have the single-mindedness of their purpose to see it through until it's successful. They can't read it anymore. So they start it and jump off it if they don't get instant gratification. And you can't build that way. It's like when Ted Turner built his empire, he knew where he was going. That's like me in wrestling. Once I was with Eddie Graham for that year and a half or two years, from then on I was focused and knew where I was going. I would make slight detours at times, but my direction was upwards and forwards. I saw it.

I've talked to people over there at different times and they've tried to copy what I was saying, but it was and they've tried to copy what I was saying, but it was just a copy. Since it wasn't their vision, they couldn't see it and couldn't carry it out. If it didn't get instant gratification, they said it must not be working. So I doubt that there would ever be a corporate structure I could fit into. And there are a lot of people over there that still fear for their jobs. They don't realize I don't realize I don't have axes to grind. All I would care about is

getting the job done and do what I had to do. So I would still have to sit down with Ted for a couple of hours - and Ted doesn't like to sit that long with any body, he loses interest - but I would want to know what he truly believes his goal is and I would like to structure it so it couldn't change next week because otherwise I couldn't change next week, because otherwise I couldn't please anyone there. I would need to know what the boss wanted. Ted understands enough of wrestling. I don't want to deal with a corporate head that doesn't know wrestling. So I don't think there's a chance of that.

Keller: Who would you have under you if you were hired by WCW?

Watts: Oh, let's not get into that in case it ever happened, that raises too many problems. They would only be there as long as they could produce, but that's incentive to produce. If you've got a team they've got to be sharp, they can't be in a comfort zone because, unfortunately in wrestling, it comes unbooked every night at eight o'clock. You can build momentum and run on momentum, but it's going to take one hellacious amount of energy to turn that giant around because they've let it go so far in the dump's. It's like a guy asked me the other day, "Wouldn't it be hilarious if Vince was still paying Dusty." I mean, I haven't talked to Dusty since the Crockett fiasco. It's just that Dusty's arrogance has gotten so carried away. And I've known him since he got in the business. He and I have been up and down the highway; we used to be so close. It's a funny thing with so many people and their mentor. At some point they want to put their mentor down, but I don't know why because let me tell ya', when I was down, I would call Dusty and ask for his ideas. I've never been bashful. I didn't give a shit whose idea it was. The key to me was the bottom line. I was one of the first promoters that pulled myself out of the ring so I could build other stars. I was the one that was telling Dusty for years to pull himself out of the ring, that he was getting too fat and he was no longer the "American Dream," he was "The Great White Whale." Get out of the ring. Use your genius. His ego couldn't let him out of the ring. He was consumed with his own ego. And I went through that. The first star I ever built by myself in Oklahoma was Dick Slater. I'll never forget coming out of the dressing room in Shreveport and all the fans running past me to get to Dick. And it pissed me off. And I had to go sit in the motel that evening and look in the mirror and get my ego under control. "You just made a star, now you don't have to be in the towns each night. Now build another one, and another one, and another one." You didn't want all our eggs in one basket, even though Dicky's word was good, he could be in a car wreck. That's when I first started understanding getting my own ego under control to a certain extent. Let's face it, we're all ego driven. But that's when I started building stars and my gates took off. And that's what we did in Florida. We had so many ways to go, that way fans were flocking to the arena because they couldn't sit there and pick our direction.

Hodgson Dismisses "The Letter"

By John Arezzi

Murray Hodgson, a central figure in the WWF sex scandal controversy, has dismissed a recent letter he sent to Titan Sports CEO Vince McMahon as irrelevant. The letter asks McMahon to use him in the upcoming World Body Building Federation's Personal Fitness Expo. Hodgson is currently involved in a legal battle with Titan Sports. He is suing the company for wrongful termination of employment and sexual harassment, allegedly because he didn't give in to the ex-WWF Vice President Pat Patterson's homosexual advances, he was fired.

Pro Wrestling Spotlight has obtained a copy of the letter, which the WWF made available to "A Current Affair", who read excerpts of it on their recent piece on the current WWF problems. It read:

"The second annual WBF Championship is coming up soon and I would like to offer my services as host of the Personal Fitness Expo, and as announcer for the live event, much the same as my duties last year in Atlantic City.

There is nothing like consistency, and no doubt my reputation precedes itself with the World Body Building Federation. Everyone from your wife Linda, to Jonathan Flora, Retta Logan and Pete Kleinschmidt, all spoke very highly of my performance last year, and the producers of the live show were emphatic about wanting my voice exclusively for their show.

Obviously I have a lot of spare time on my hands, and this would be a great opportunity for me to make some extra money as well. It would also give you the reassurance that the job will be done in a fashion expected of such a first rate production.

If you would like to discuss details, I'd love to talk with somebody from your office. I remember in our meeting last August, 1991, you mentioned you would like to use me for occasional freelance voice work, and this seems like the best place to start. I look forward to hearing from your office at your leisure. Best of luck and continued success with the WBF."

Since the public disclosure of this letter, Hodgson has come under criticism from those covering the story, who wonders why he would send such a request to a man he was trying to sue. In a conversation I had with him on May 2, Murray blew it off. "That was nothing," Murray said, "The letter's point was to prove how positive the people in the company thought of me last year." Murray was upset that "A Current Affair" didn't read the entire letter. "It makes it sound as if I'm begging for my job back, which is the furthest thing from the truth."

Depositions for the case have been postponed from an initial date of April 24 because, according to Hodgson, McMahon's attorney's couldn't be admitted in the state of Connecticut because they are not Connecticut lawyers. Titan is bringing in some out of state lawyers to do battle in the case, and they have to be admitted in the state through a motion in the Connecticut courts.

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Hodgson did not sound as if he was someone who was ready to "settle" with Titan Sports. At times he was irate at some of the behind the scenes actions. He claims there are parties trying to dig up dirt on him, and discredit him.

"This is getting real dirty," Murray said, "not only with me but with all of it. A Current Affair even panicked and dropped Rita Chatterton from the show because there were behind the scenes things going on that made them not believe Rita any longer." (Editors note: Chatterton is a former WWF retiree who alleges that Vince McMahon forced him to have sex with him.)

Hodgson was booked to appear on the Pro Wrestling Spotlight Radio Show on May 10th, but canceled his appearance for at least two weeks, until the depositions were taken.

We'll continue to update this story.



May 1, 1992
By Jon Maxian

The anticipation of a great show buoyed by the appearance of Sid Justice VS The Ultimate Warrior took a direct hit when Big Sid was a no-show. The Coliseum had the bail out on the outside event board and on billboards by the entrances. The audience didn't seem to mind, being satisfied with Papa Shonga as an able replacement. (More on the match later.) Personally, I came to see the Hit Man VS Shawn Michaels with Sensational Sherri, and I can't say enough about Sherri. (That was worth the price of admission alone, more on that later, too!)

Crush "Demolishes" Kato

Before I review this opening match, which by the way, was one of the better openers I've seen in a while, I must say, the crowd (I'm hoping 13,000 constitutes at least a crowd) was pumped! When Kato was announced, there was a slight sigh, but when Crush (formerly of Demolition) was called, the audience really popped! Crush, making his post-Demolition debut in Long Island as a face was not a disappointment. Garbed in uncharacteristic pastels, Crush totally dominated Kato, not only with strength, but with agility and wrestling prowess I had never noticed when he was with Demolition. Crush even performed a Scott Steiner Tilt-A-Whirl with cover and pin. Crisp action, Kato worked well. Good Start **

Nasty Boys defeat Owen Hart and Jim Powers

The Nasties came down the aisle working the fans into a lather. I could have done without Saggs' reference to the crowd over the mike, but I won't let that deter from a good match. No pop for Powers, nice pop for Hart. Powers looked in great shape, almost too good to be true. So far tonight everyone is working hard and the crowd is still happening. The action went back and forth with heavy doses of double teaming from the Nasties with Powers taking most of the bumps. Small comeback by Owen and Jimmy showing their talents but Nobbs pinned Powers when the ref was occupied with Hart, Saggs dropped the elbow on Jimmy Powers and turned him over for the pin. I liked this one even more.**

Rick "The Model" Martel defeats El Matador

First yawner of the night. (I remember when these guys could really move!) Rick worked hard to get a response, yelling into the mike at the fans to give him the respect he deserves. Mild pop for Tito. (Whatever happened to Tito's Indian Death Lock submission hold? It was a great finisher.) Too much mat time for these classy journeymen. Neither one dominated the other. Eventually Martel got the nod with the help of the ropes and left the ring in a hurry. Tito got a polite sendoff from his fans. I will as well. *1/2 politely

FIRST PART OF THIS CO-MAIN EVENT SHOW.

The Ultimate Warrior pins Papa Shango

Papa Shango took his time coming down the aisle doing that voodoo that he does so well. The crowd erupted for the Ultimate Warrior's mad dash to the ring, working his way through the ropes and clotheslining Papa Shango twice sending the voodoo master over the top rope. Warrior followed Shango for a small exchange, then went back inside. Shango never came out of his trance-like state. The big man from Haiti finally grabbed the Warrior and the match went into a trance as the two of them seemed to be motionless forever. This set up the traditional buildup of the supernatural energy from the little warriors. Then 4 ultimate clotheslines, an ultimate splash with the ultimate pin proved to be ultimately boring. But I'm 38, the kids adore him. This is the second chance for the ultimate Hulk Hogan stand in, I hope he makes the most of it this time. ***1/2 stars.

"Hacksaw" Jim Duggan over Repo Man by DQ

Repo should tow himself away for standing in a no-standing zone. Duggan (replacing the British Bulldog) worked overtime to carry this time filler match, urging the crowd to chant USA to the point of tedium. For alas poor Smash we knew ye well, Repo's downfall was certain, Duggan wins via DQ. Repo smacked Hacksaw with the hook of his tow rope. Some extra hi-jinx got some laughs when they played hide-and-go seek before Duggan chased Repo up the aisle. * and add * for Duggan's hard work, the kids like him too. Tough Guy!

SECOND MAIN EVENT

Brett "Hit Man" Hart pins Shawn Michaels w/ Sensational Sherri

***Before it even starts. Expectations were high for a fast and furious match. Shawn Michaels entered first with the sensational one in tow. (He has all the tools, but I like him better as a face.) I was hoping for a fast start, but NO! I had to wait out the feeling process. The action happened in fast intense, but short sequences with long rest periods (way too long for these two.) Every time Sherri took a whack at Hart, the crowd went wild. The match kept heating up with Michaels taking most of the bumps. Sherri did her job, distracting the Hit Man and setting him up, but Brett ducked out of harms way when Shawn decked the Sensational One off the apron. The best bump of the night! Brett rolled Michaels for the pin. Post match action, when Shawn sneaked up on Brett and belted him with Sherri's boot. Hart keeps his belt and Shawn keeps his credibility, and Sherri is still in love. (For now!)* and add 1/2 a * for Sherri

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10.00

Pro Wrestling Spotlight Monthly October 1991
(Fred Blassie, Buddy Rogers, Terry Funk, Bruno)

10.00

Pro Wrestling Spotlight Monthly November 1991
(Explosive Eddie Gilbert interview)

10.00

Pro Wrestling Spotlight Monthly December 1991 (X-Mas show, Missy Hyatt, Cactus Jack)	10.00
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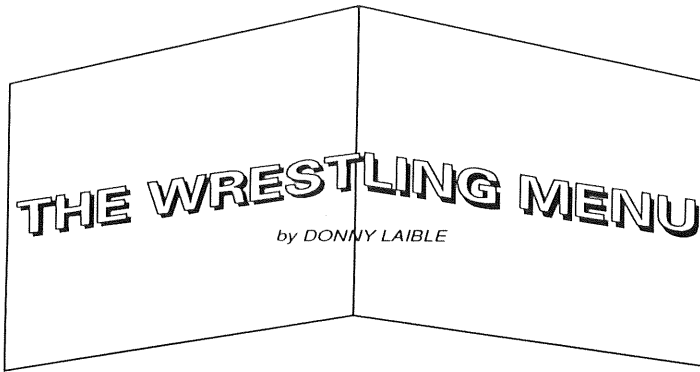
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Legion Of Doom defeat Beverly Brothers

This match needed help! The Beverly's are just plain bad. Mike Enos cannot carry this team. Get Mike a partner, Wayne Bloom is just horrible. L.O.D. looked bored playing catch me if you can for a good portion of the match. The crowd pops big for Hawk and Animals' every move. Hawk took everything the Beverly's could think of. Hawk finally tagged Animal and he cleaned house and even executed a nice double DDT. L.O.D. - the winner by a pin. Nice display by L.O.D. taking a young fan into the ring.**

Overall, it was a good crowd, and the matches were decent. didn't miss Sid. I don't think anyone else did either. Next card, June 19th.



Hey, it's time to hand out the MENU once again. Before getting to the usual trivia, comments and news, I do want to start off on a more personal point. I want to thank you for supporting my long-time pal John Arezzi. It's been John's affiliation with past radio and newsletter projects that have made him a success. Some people without a gram of wrestling knowledge; basic training in the business, if you will, immediately and unequivocally become experts in their own mind. John has been and always will be a survivor, long after the "experts" are confronted with the reality of their limited understanding of life, let alone the inner workings of pro wrestling.

Okay, I'm off my soapbox and ready to talk business. Speaking of reality, just how many grapplers have borrowed the Graham name, in hopes of it vaulting them a little quicker up the promotional ladder? Off hand lets see, there has been Dr. Jerry, "Superstar" Billy, "Crazy" Luke, Eddie, Mike, Jerry Jr., and at least a half dozen others. Guess what, folks? Dr. Jerry is the original and the only true Graham. For the record, Eddie and his own son, Mike, who gained fame and considerable fortune through association began with Dr. Jerry - their real last name is Gossett.

Trivia time, put on your thinking masks. What wrestler appeared as Mr. Jacksonville a couple of decades back in Florida? (Where else?) Hint - he's trained several of the sports biggest names today.

Living in the Utica, New York area, my inquiring mind had my fingers do the walking through the telephone book to look up under the letter C, guess who's number?...It's Easter time, so don't get too angry with me when I say Joe Savoldi of IWCCW deserves to be Brian Pillman's opponent... You won't find any wrestler more open and honest about the business than The Honky Tonk Man.

A quick and painless recovery goes out to one of wrestling's greatest fans, Richie Kraemer of Lavallette, New Jersey, who is laid up with a bum leg. Recently, Richie passed along a newspaper clipping of the late sportswriter Dick Young, then of the New York Daily News, from September 5, 1970. There's an item in it concerning wrestling I thought you'd find interesting.

Dick Young - I thought of the story Lindsay Nelson (then NY Mets baseball announcer) told about the time he was working for the Nashville Journal: "We had the paper ready to go to press, and the only thing that was holding us there for the rest of the night would be the wrestling results. I had a good friend working at the arena. I called him and said, George, let me know what's going to happen so we can get out of here. He said sure, and he gave me the whole card, who would win each match, how, and in what time."

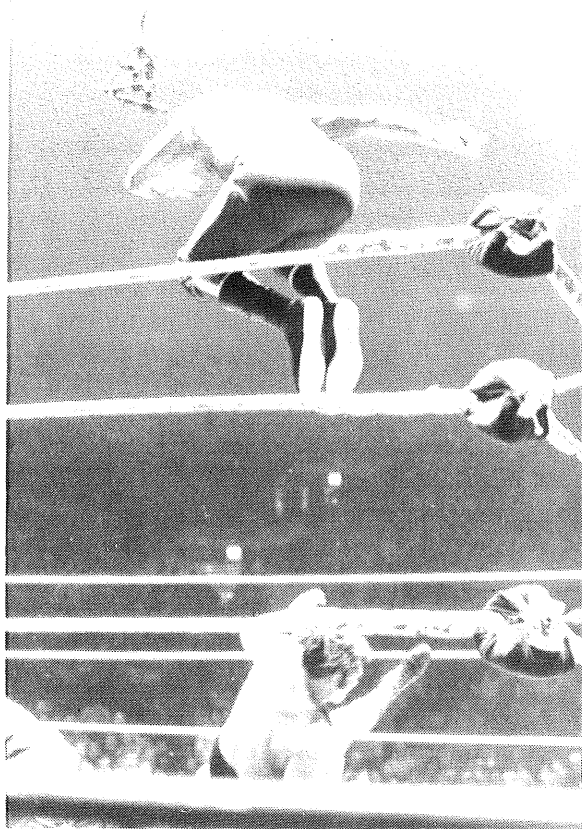
"I had set, but forgot to tell the guy to hold it out 'till the later edition. We were on the streets at 7:30 that night with the results of the matches that were going to start at 8PM, and people in the lobby, on line to buy tickets, were reading the results. It didn't mean a thing for a wrestling fan, it's the old saying: "Are you gonna believe what you see, or what I tell you?" Think about it!

Pencils down, here's the quiz answer - Hiro Matsuda. The New England Wrestling Federation has a show planned for May 17 in Barre, Vermont (afternoon). Promoter Cliff Bartz promises Hercules, Marty Jannetty, The Barbarian and Demolition Ax plus locals. Oh, Dino Bravo is booked as well. Call Bartz at (802)253-2168 for ticket information or write: P.O. Box 327 Waterbury, VT 05676. Nine matches in all are scheduled for the Barre Municipal Auditorium.

Plug-O-Gram time: Lewis "Crash" Curry, 1607 North Port Street, Baltimore, MD 21213 is thinking of starting a newsletter containing plugs for those wishing to buy, trade and sell photos, tapes, newsletters, etc. Anyone interested in getting involved can write "Crash" or call (410)563-2636 from 5-11PM EST...Speaking of photos, Ron McDowell, R.R. 5 Box 244, Falmouth, KY 41040, has fabulous photos of USWA wrestlers. (Just about all who have been with the promotion during the past 3 years.) Attention collectors - contact Ron, he has posed and action shots...The latest issue of The Wrestling Flyer reached me this week. Thirty pages of news, results, pictures and more covering all the groups. There's also a trivia test to attempt. I found this issue a thoroughly enjoyable read at \$2.00 an issue. Send to: P.O. Box 283 Wallingford, PA 19086...\$2.50 gets you a copy of The Wrestling Chatterbox. Publisher Georgiann Markopoulos does a wonderful job - contact her at 23-44 30th Drive, Astoria, NY 11102-3252...Wrestling World Examiner comes out bi-weekly at \$1.00 an issue. Write to Paul Adamovic, P.O. Box 303, Irvington, NY 10533-4303...Wrestling Then and Now is edited by Evan Ginzburg, P.O. Box 471, Oakland Gardens Station, Flushing, NY 11364.

Before parting, I have two requests. If anyone can get me a copy of the double issue of the Pro Wrestling Spotlight Weekly, I will be more than happy to pay for it. Guess my copy is lost in the mail. Also, here's something to tease your brain - What do Uncle Ulmer and the Lone Ranger have in common? Your comments and suggestions are always encouraged to better this column. Let me hear from you - Donny Laible, P.O. Box 443, Ilion, NY 13357

Name The Wrestlers Contest #1



Here's how to play - Simply name the two wrestlers below in this Madison Square Garden Main Event from 1974 and you could win a free set of Wrestling Legends Trading Cards. We will choose one winner from the correct entries submitted. If no correct answers are received, we will add another prize to our next contest.

Send all replies to Pro Wrestling Spotlight Productions
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In The Coming Weeks...

Readers of PWS will be pleased to know that in future issues we will have a three part interview with Dave Meltzer, who talks about the evolution of the *Wrestling Observer* and the impact he has had on the business. This is the FIRST interview of its kind Dave has done. Plus, next week the Z-man, Tom Zenk speaks, and you'll be surprised about what he has to say regarding the WWF, steroids and the sex scandals. We're still in need of correspondents and columnists, and you're certainly invited to send in your mat memories and letters.

This Just In...

NAWA to Ink Deal with Sports Channel

Tony Capone, head of the North American Wrestling Association has announced that his promotion has inked a deal with Sports Channel, which will bring the organization their 1st TV exposure.

Based out of Mt. Vernon, NY, the NAWA will have its next TV tapings on June 13th at the Mt. Vernon High School.

The group will make its TV debut on Sunday July 5th. More detail will be available in the next week or two.

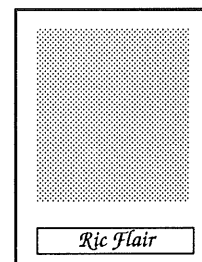
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Mat Memories

By John Arezzi

Each week this column usually brings you a memory of mine which dates back to the 1970's, or even earlier. I'm going to change that format, beginning with this week. I'm going back to 1989, September 17, to be exact. That holds a special memory for me, as it was the day I was first introduced to Michael Foley, then known as Cactus Jack Manson, and today known as just plain Cactus Jack.

I met Cactus Jack through an introduction from Sonny Blaze, (the WWF jobber) who in 1989 was a frequent guest on the Pro Wrestling Spotlight, when it aired on WNYG-AM. Sonny had worked out with Cactus at the late Mark Tendler's Wrestling School on Long Island. Sonny had told me Jack was a star in WCCW, and was a native Long Islander. I can honestly say I had never seen Jack work and had second thoughts about his appearance on the show. After thinking about it I agreed to bring him on as a guest, which was a turning point for me and my show.



Photo by Bob Mulrenin

The Sunday of Jack's first appearance was a normal one for me. I had prepared myself for the show, but really had no idea about this guy Cactus Jack Manson. I arrived at the WNYG studios at about 4PM, an hour before show time. At about 4:30PM the doorbell of the station rang and in came Cactus. I was impressed with his look right off the bat, and surprised on how polite and mild mannered he seemed to be. He made an unusual request before show time. He wanted to stand up during the show. Even though the program was two hours, he insisted on standing up. When I asked him why, he explained that he was going to practice a few monologues he would hopefully use someday on television. At that time, Jack didn't get an awful lot of time for interviews, as Skander Akbar would do most of the talking for him.

For me, this show just flew by, even though I had no idea what to ask him. From the first minute of the program, Jack took control. He was a nonstop talking machine. At that time, my listening audience consisted of the same 15-20 callers out of an estimated 500 listeners. Those 500 listeners, 15-20 callers, and yours truly, were extremely entertained by this madman for two nonstop hours.

The highlight of Cactus' appearance this day was the closing ten minutes of the show, when Jack did a comparison between Gomez Adams and Herman Munster, which has become a truly funny piece of radio history.

After the appearance, Cactus and Sonny invited me to get together with them later in the week to watch some of Jack's matches. I believe at that time Cactus was preparing a tape for the NWA. I accepted. I wanted to see if this guy could work as well as he spoke.

That night at Sonny Blaze's house was a night I'll long remember. Cactus put on a few of his "highlight" tapes, and videos of his best bumps. I was amazed. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. He put his life on the line several times during the matches I viewed and I immediately became a fan of this suicidal wrestler. That night Cactus dubbed a copy of his highlights, and a few of his matches for me, which I proceeded to watch over and over again when I got home.

After that week, I didn't see Jack again until December, three months later, but I began to watch WCCW/USWA to see him work. I then welcomed him back on the show in January 1990. He was just hired by the NWA and was thrilled about it.

I began to develop a friendship with Cactus. I sensed a strong respect by him for the wrestling business. He was a real student of the game, and truly loved what he was doing. He was polite with the fans and as fine a gentleman outside the ring, as he was ruthless and suicidal inside of it.

The telling tale of what kind of person Cactus Jack is, was the day he first met my mom. First of all, my mom scares easily, and does not understand that wrestlers in and out of the ring can be different people. My mom saw Jack on TV and was petrified of him. I invited him over one night to watch a few tapes, my mom didn't even want him near the property, in fact she was near tears. But, after meeting him, she now thinks the world of him. It's the same story when anyone meets Cactus Jack. He is one of a kind. There should be more pro's on the business like him.

Since meeting him in 1989, I have many great mat memories of Cactus Jack, in and out of the ring. I feel fortunate to call him a friend. He will be on top of his profession for as long as he desires to be in this business. Although he may never be world champion of WCW or the WWF, (they seem to chose champions based on muscle definition these days), I know one thing, if they ever chose a champion based on heart, and love for the business, then Cactus Jack will hold the strap longer than anyone in wrestling ever has.

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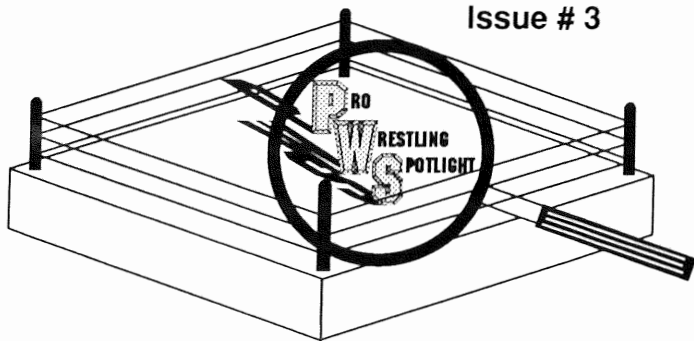
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